

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 01012 121115 Z

11

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IGA-02 AID-20 EB-11 AGR-20 COME-00 TRSE-00

HEW-08 DOTE-00 OMB-01 RSR-01 /185 W
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P R 111630 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 69 37

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS BAMA KO 1012

E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: EAID, ML

SUBJECT: DROUGHT SITUATION IN MALI

REF: BAMA KO 1010

1. FOLLOWING IS REPORT ON EASTERN PART OF SIXHT REGION -- THE
" GOURMA", AND NIGER RIVER BEND FROM TIMBUKTU THROUGH BOUREM TO
GAO AND BORDER WITH NIGER, VISITED BY FSR DENICOURT ON APRIL
5-8 .

2. FOOD SUPPLY FOR THIS LESS- HEAVILY INHABITED REGION OF NOMADS
AND OF SMALL AGRICULTURAL VILLAGES ALONG THE NIGER RIVER IS
VERY MARGINAL TODAY AND IN COMING MONTHS COULD BE DISASTROUS
UNLESS MORE GRAIN CAN BE BROUGHT IN. THREE- FOURTHS ON INHABITANTS
ARE RIVER BOTTOM FARMERS OR TOWN DWELLERS IN GAO, ANSONGO,
AND BOUREM. ONE QUARTER ARE NOMADIC HERDSMEN. MOST OF NOMADS
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PAGE 02 BAMAKO 01012 121115 Z

HAVE COME INTO TOWNS, PARTICULARLY GAO, OR GONE SOUTH WITH THEIR CATTLE AND CONCENTRATION IN TOWNS EASES RELIEF PROBLEM IF GRAIN CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE. SO FAR, WITH RATIONING IN EFFECT, THERE NO PROVEN CASES OF STARVATION, DESPITE USUAL RUMORS OF STARVATION IN DISTANT VILLAGES.

3. FACT THAT FOOD SITUATION HAS BEEN RELATIVELY GOOD TO DATE IS DUE TO GOOD ORGANIZATION BY ARMY AND OPAM, SMALL DELIVERIES GRAIN BY RIVER BEFORE NAVIGATION STOPPED, AND AIRLIFT BY SOVIETS AND WEST GERMANS. TRUCK SUPPLY TO OUTLYING AREAS FROM TIMBUKTU AND GAO SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN QUICK AND WELL ORGANIZED. GRAIN OFFLOADED IN GAO WITHIN ONE- HALF HOUR OF LANDING, PUT ON TRUCKS WHICH AVAILABLE AT THE AIRPORT AND HAULED AWAY TO THE VARIOUS CIRCLES. FROM CIRCLES FOOD REDISTRIBUTED TO " ARRONDISSEMENTS". NOMADS AND SEDENTARY VILLAGES HAVE TO COME TO " ARRONDISSEMENTS" TO PURCHASE THEIR GRAIN.

4. PRESENTLY, AVAILABLE STOCKS OF GRAIN, EVEN WITH STRICT RATIONING, WILL LAST UNTIL MAY 15. SOVIET PLANE WILL ONLY TRANSPORT ABOUT 400 TONS (100 TONS A WEEK) IN NEXT MONTH BEFORE IT SCHEDULED TO DEPART. THIS WILL STILL LEAVE EASTERN PART OF SIXTH REGION NEEDING 5,000 TONS GRAIN UNTIL NAVIGATION OPENS ON NIGER. EVEN THEN, ADEQUATE FOOD RELIEF DEPENDS ON MALI SOMEWHERE FINDING AND BRINGING IN FROM PORTS GREATER AMOUNTS THAN NOW AVAILABLE. MEANWHILE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME BLACK-MARKETING AT VERY HIGH PRICES, OPAM AND ARMY SEEM TO HAVE SITUATION IN HAND. A TEMPORARY PROBLEM HAS DEVELOPED IN GAO AS RESULT OF A LOCAL FUEL SHORTAGE WHICH IS HALTING ALL BUT ESSENTIAL VEHICULAR MOVEMENT. THIS IS EXPECTED TO BE RECTIFIED WITHIN FEW DAYS, HOWEVER.

5.. GRIM SITUATION IN RURAL AREAS CORRESPONDS VERY CLOSELY TO THAT DESCRIBED IN NIAMEY 773. ALL AGREED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN LARGE MIGRATION INTO NIGER SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, BUT MANY NIGERIENS HAD ALSO MOVED INTO MALI. HENCE, IT DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE WHAT TOTAL MOVEMENT IS BETWEEN NIGER AND MALI. TWO MALIAN AREAS, MENAKA AND GOURMA- RHAROUS, HAVE RECEIVED SOME RAIN AND HENCE HAVE SOME GRASS. AS RESULT, CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF NOMADS MOVED INTO THESE AREAS. LOCAL OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT THREE - FOURTHS OF ALL OF CATTLE IN THIS REGION HAVE ALREADY DIED. NUMBER MAY REACH 80 TO 90 PERCENT OF HERD.
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PAGE 03 BAMAKO 01012 121115 Z

THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE GOATS OR CAMELS. DIAGNOSIS ARE RELATIVELY

WELL OFF SINCE THEY EAT LEAVES OFF TREES RATHER THAN GRASS AND OTHER GROUND- GROWN FORAGE. THERE ARE STILL SOME WELLS WHICH ARE NOT COMPLETELY DRY AND WATER IS AVAILABLE NEAR THE NIGER. CATTLE SITUATION AROUND GOURMA WELLS, MANY DRILLED BY GERMANS, IS DESPERATE: THERE IS PLENTY OF WATER, BUT NO GRASS FOR 30 KILOMETER RADIUS OF WELLS. CATTLE ARRIVING TO DRINK ARE TOO WEAK TO MOVE ON TO GRASS HENCE THEY DIE. FORAGE AND WATER ARE PRACTICALLY NEVER LOCATED IN SAME PLACE. EVEN IN MENAKA AREA, WHICH IS RELATIVELY WELL OFF, ANIMALS MUST BE DRIVEN UP TO 50 KILOMETERS FOR WATER AND RETURNED TO PASTURAGE WHERE RAIN HAS FALLEN IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES TO ALLOW GRASS AND OTHER FORAGE MATERISLS TO GROW. PASTURES ALONG NIGER ALMOST GRAZED OUT. MANY AREAS HAD ALREADY BEEN SUBJECT TO OVERGRAZING LAST FEW YEARS. MANY OFFICIALS PREDICT AREAS MIGHT NOT BE ABLE SUPPORT CATTLE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. ONE OFFICIAL, HOWEVER, STATED THAT HE DOUBTED SITUATION SO DESPERATE. IN 1 969, HE HAD BEEN ASSIGNED IN DROUGHT AREA WHERE LAND HAD BEEN OVERGRAZED AND IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED BE BARREN FOLLOWING YEAR. HOWEVER, " FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON", POSSIBLY BECAUSE SEED MATERIAL HAD BEEN BLOWN IN FROM OTHER AREAS, GRASS CONTINUED TO GROW AND AREAS WAS USABLE AGAIN FOR CATTLE.

BLAKE

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